

REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF
THE TOWN OF LEXINGTON.

FOR THE YEAR 1864-5.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,
15, WATER STREET.
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REPORT.

THE WARREN SCHOOL has continued through the year under the charge of Miss ISABELLA CUTLER, and gives us no grounds for comment beyond the repetition in substance of what we have said in commendation before. During the winter term,—unlike nearly all the other schools,—it has had a more than usually regular attendance. The progress made in the studies has been satisfactory, the deportment good; and the state of the school, in all respects, such as cause regret that Miss Cutler feels compelled, by considerations chiefly of health, to decline a re-election. Six years of faithful, conscientious, and successful work entitle her to our grateful acknowledgments. It is pleasant to know, that she carries with her the warm affection of her pupils, and the respect and good-will of their parents.

The FRANKLIN SCHOOL, in the care of Miss FRANCES M. PARKER, has presented a pleasant and gratifying instance of quiet, methodical, and useful work, the value of which, we think, may fail of its just recognition in some measure, because it is so still and unpretending. The number of pupils has been somewhat larger than the year before, though the actual attendance during the last term has been less, owing to the prevalence of sickness, especially of scarlet fever. One member of the school has died of this disease. We particularly commend the neatness and econ-

omy displayed in the care of the house and the fires, the credit of which is due to the teacher, who has personally taken charge of these things. In both of these schools, we notice, with peculiar satisfaction, the healthy, moral influence exerted on the scholars, assimilating the schools to the best type of happy and well-governed families.

The BOWDITCH SCHOOL, under Miss ANNA M. KNIGHT, has not fully met the favorable expectations awakened at the examination a year ago. At the two examinations, the recitations were fair, the deportment good. In regard to discipline in the schoolroom, and out of doors, the school has appeared well through the year, as compared with the other schools. But, at the visits made in term-time, the recitations and general air of the classes have indicated a want of interest and of working spirit, such as seriously to lessen the good results that might be looked for, from the abilities of the pupils, and the labors of a teacher undoubtedly well qualified as far as mental attainments go. This defect we cannot suppose to be owing to any natural deficiency in the pupils.

The HOWARD SCHOOL, after being tendered to several young ladies of already established character as teachers, was, at the beginning of the year, put in charge of Miss EMILY A. PEIRCE, who has taught through the year. Miss Peirce has shown herself a faithful and painstaking teacher, and has succeeded, in a good degree, in all respects. At the examinations, we have noted recitations fair, — deportment very good. At the closing examination, owing to the teacher's illness, the school was wholly in charge of the Committee. That, under these circumstances, there were no failures in recitations, and a behavior entirely correct, speaks well for the moral state of the school. This school has suffered much from irregular attendance, caused mostly by prevailing sickness.

HANCOCK SUB-PRIMARY. — Miss SIMONDS has continued through the year to perform the work of this little school, in the same gentle and kind manner we have before noted, and which is so well suited to the character of the school. We look here less for advancement in the knowledge that comes from books, than for the formation of good manners and quiet habits, — the culture of the minor morals of the schoolroom. We regard the work as no less important than that of the other schools, and requiring gifts both of mind and heart no less rare. It is well worthy the love and devotion of a teacher who estimates rightly the first unfoldings of thought and feeling in young immortals. The number of pupils at the end of the spring term was forty-four, while the room is prepared for only thirty-six; its size not permitting a larger number, with any regard to either health or convenience. At the beginning of the fall term, the number was reduced to the proper limits, partly by excluding two or three children under the legal age, — one being less than four years old, — and partly by transferring a class to the Primary School. During the winter term, the attendance has been much reduced by sickness.

HANCOCK PRIMARY. — We have no new feature to mark in particular. The number has been quite as large as is consistent with the greatest real economy, rising at one time to fifty-five. The discipline in the main has been firm, without undue severity. Some instances of persistence in unruly conduct, and some of punishments thought to be unreasonably severe, have been brought to our attention in the course of the year. There is not altogether the kind and degree of control over the irregular propensities of childhood in this school, which we consider essential to entire success; the deficiency being, in some measure, apparent in the schoolroom, but more out of it. We by no means wish to convey the idea, that the teacher has not

labored as zealously and faithfully as in previous years. We speak of facts that force themselves on our notice. We know that the task of the teacher of this school is a difficult one, and rendered more so by the presence of a large school of older children, whose manners and habits exercise a great influence on the younger. One pupil has been lost to the school by death.

HANCOCK GRAMMAR.—Miss STETSON has fulfilled the expectations, entertained a year ago, in all that relates to the progress of the school in studies. Generally, the scholarship has been such as to meet reasonable demands. In some respects, the last examination showed a thoroughness not often equalled in our schools of the same grade. In regard to the discipline of the school, using the word in the broadest sense, as standing for the whole moral condition, there is much wanting to what is justly expected of such a school. The order in the room has not been of a high character, and the defect has been still more apparent outside of the schoolroom. Rudeness of act and speech, carelessness and abuse in the treatment of the buildings and surrounding property, want of courteousness to passers-by, and, in general, a coarse and turbulent style of conduct, have characterized the school, as compared with its own condition in former times, and that of the other schools in town generally. These things prove a great and radical defect somewhere in the influences acting upon the school. The facts are easier to be seen and stated than the explanation of them. We simply call attention to the matter, as one of the profoundest importance to the future character of the young, who are here receiving the impulses that will most likely shape their future lives. It calls imperatively for the united efforts of committee, teacher, and parents, to correct the evil as far as possible.

One thing, in justice to the teachers of the two schools

last named, should be said. The whole number of pupils in the three departments has risen to a hundred and forty. More than a hundred, consequently, have to be shared between the two upper departments. Comparing the expense of the several schools in town, and the number of pupils attending each, it appears that those of the Hancock School cost an average of a little over six dollars; less by more than a dollar than any other school in town, and but a little more than half that of the Adams School. In fact, the teachers of the two schools under consideration are overtasked; and it is not strange that the consequences are seen in the state of the schools.

If the steady increase of the numbers of children attending school at the Centre continues, it will soon be necessary to establish another school. A primary school, placed somewhere near the railroad-crossing, would accommodate the children better than the present arrangement, and reduce the Centre School to manageable size. This might prevent the need of doing what perhaps will otherwise be deemed, sooner or later, expedient; namely, the employment of a man at the Centre, which would involve an increase of expense greater than that of an additional primary school, after the first cost of preparing the room.

ADAMS PRIMARY.—Miss HOWE has fully sustained her previous character, and, at the closing examination, presented the school in a condition every way gratifying to our desires in its behalf. We think it likely this school has been benefited, in some measure, by the improved condition of the grammar department for the last two or three years. It suffered much from absence caused by sickness, during the winter,—a quarter part of the pupils being absent on examination-day. No other indication of the evil effects was apparent. The school is worthy in the highest degree of the approval of its friends.

ADAMS GRAMMAR. — Under the care of Mr. E. O. GROVER, this school has continued steadily to improve through the year. Mr. Grover has introduced some methods out of the usual track; has spared no effort of mind, will, and heart, to bring the school wholly under his controlling influence; has awakened a degree of ambition and interest in the scholars, not of late years found in this school, and led them to a high point of scholarship. The first class, numbering eleven, who took their leave of the school at the last examination, will probably form the controlling element in the entering class at the High School, and give room for high hopes of its character and abilities.

THE HIGH SCHOOL. — We have nothing to add to, or subtract from, what we have before said of this school, and its diligent, devoted, and energetic teacher. We will devote the space belonging to it to a statement respecting some points in its plan. Its leading purpose is, or ought to be, not to create for itself a great name or reputation, but to afford to all the children of the town, who wish to avail themselves of it, the best practicable opportunity for further education, after they have *fairly* used the opportunities of the lower schools. In determining what is a fair use of the Grammar Schools, and what degree of scholarship should entitle one to enter the High School, we cannot adopt an ideal standard, nor even that of the best pupils, but such as agrees with the average capacities of childhood, both mental and moral. We do not consider it right to admit to the High School one who has evidently slighted the proper work of the Grammar School; nor, on the other hand, to exclude those who have been of respectable habits and proficiency as scholars in the preparatory course, even though they do not show a perfect mastery of all the field of study gone over. There is room here, of course, for difference of opinion as to the standard; and, with the best

idea of the standard, room for mistake in its application to particular cases. It is not strange, then, that some of the pupils admitted to the High School prove unequal to the work required of them there, especially when that work is qualified by a very exacting method; by very high requirements as to thoroughness and self-reliance.

But for the interests of the High School,—and by this we mean the interests of its pupils collectively,—it is necessary that there should be a regular course of studies; and that the pupils should be required to move together in a limited scheme of classes. If, now, a portion of those admitted are not able to keep up with the rest, so as to accomplish the allotted work in the time set for it, one of three things must follow: those who are able and willing to do the work must be hindered; or the failing part continue in form with the class, but really slighting the studies required; or, falling behind, form one or more classes, not in the regularly arranged order of the school, thus impeding the progress of the whole by diverting a part of the teacher's time from what ought to have his undivided attention, or being committed to the less effective instructions of the assistant, or of other pupils. The latter has been the actual case for three years past, and the evil assumed a greater magnitude in the instance of the last class admitted than before. We do not now present any theory as to the best means of lessening or removing the evil, but urge the importance of thoroughness, rather than haste, in the studies of the grammar schools, and suggest the reason why a more rigid method of examination may be pursued hereafter in testing the fitness of the pupils to enter the High School.

At the close of the school, nine pupils received diplomas. The graduating exercises were attended by a crowded and most interested audience, who freely testified by applause the satisfaction with which they listened. The essays,

translations, and declamations of the graduating class displayed ability and good taste in composition, and a pleasing style in delivery. The original declamations especially, with some, by members of the other classes, of selected pieces, were of unusual excellence. The performances were varied by singing, performed with great spirit by a choir of the pupils.

GENERAL REVIEW.

Discipline.—This has received our earnest attention. We offer a few remarks on the general subject.

Teachers are regarded by the State as in the place of parents during school-hours, and so long as the pupil may be regarded as in the care of the teacher. That the teacher has the same right of control and discipline as the parent has, has been fully settled by legal authority. But this right implies corresponding duties. Whatever it is the duty of the parent to do or endeavor for the mental and moral good, for the health and happiness of his children, it is the bounden duty of the teacher to do, or to faithfully endeavor to do, in all those respects in which he has the care of his pupils. School discipline should be the expression of a true interest in the pupil's welfare,—tempered by kindness, guided by reason, and directed not to immediate results only or chiefly, but to the formation of good habits, and the culture of correct principles and worthy sentiments. Hasty, angry, petulant treatment,—stern, cold-blooded, harsh treatment,—are destructive of true school discipline. Only that deserves the name, or is entitled to approval, which springs from a kind and conscientious wish and purpose to benefit the object of it. We look forward to the time when all brutalizing punishments will be banished from our schools; not to give place to laxity, but

supplanted by a better and far more effective control,—that of a high character, of true dignity, and of firm and wise decision.

To exercise well the office of teacher, it is absolutely necessary to have a serious, unselfish, earnest spirit, devoted to the work; to make it the all-controlling object of life for the time, and steadfastly to avoid all occupations and amusements aside from it, except in that degree which, by refreshing the energies of body and mind, tends to their highest practicable efficiency in the school. If the teacher is pre-occupied by scenes and pleasures disconnected with his school, he cannot give to it the hearty interest and vital force necessary to do the work well; cannot come to the school, wearied by late hours and exciting amusements, and have strength of body, and vigor of thought and feeling, to breathe animation into the exercises of the school. The children take their pitch of feeling from the teacher; and, if not stimulated by him, will be languid in the schoolroom, and use their strength and vital force out of it in play. The school-time is limited to six hours per day, for five days of each seven, because the work of the school, if well done, is arduous and exhausting both to teacher and pupil. It is well known, that a pupil who is compelled to labor hard out of school, studies at a disadvantage in school; and the same law applies to the teacher, and it is immaterial as to the results, whether the extra work is what one does for economical reasons, or the equally exhausting work of exciting and dissipating amusements, carried beyond the bounds of useful relaxation.

The community is entitled to the hearty and undivided strength and effort of the teachers, to whom they intrust their most precious interests. Only when teachers feel this, and act accordingly, can we look for great success. The school-year gives to the teacher nearly one-fourth of

the whole year in vacations, for rest and recruiting. It is the more reasonable, that the term-time should be entirely consecrated to the use and advantage of the schools. Teachers work for pay. It is right they should; but the profession is one that cannot be justly regarded as simply a means of getting a living. No teacher can accomplish a really good work, who gives to his school only that tame, formal observance of hours and tasks which entitles him to his pay, while his heart is in other things. No childish spirit reaches to the height of this work. It requires dignity of mind, elevation of sentiment, conscientiousness, a manly or womanly calmness, self-control, and discretion,—some of that wisdom which is not the fruit of years only, but comes down from above, to all who seek it.

COURSE OF STUDY.

No changes have been made in the required course of study, beyond the substitution of Eaton's Common School Arithmetic for his larger treatise. This change was made with the expectation of requiring the pupils proposing to enter the High School to complete the Arithmetic in the Grammar School. The new book is better fitted for beginners, and yet is a complete treatise, including all that is necessary to make a thorough accountant. The change is also in accordance with the idea before advanced, of making the course in the Grammar Schools complete in the studies prescribed by law for our common schools.

APPROPRIATIONS.

The sum raised by the town last year for schools was forty-two hundred dollars,—nominally more, but really less, than in preceding years. Owing to the rise in the price of

fuel, it proved, by a small sum, insufficient for the expenses of the year. In addition, the sum of one hundred dollars was raised by private subscription, and added to the salary of Mr. Scott. At the late annual meeting, the town appropriated forty-six hundred dollars for the ensuing year,—a sum, notwithstanding the nominal increase, less, when measured by any real standard, than in former years.

In conclusion, we express our satisfaction in a general view of the state of the schools, with such qualifications as have been intimated. We are pleased to note the very general interest shown by the community, in the welfare of these our most important institutions,—those of religion excepted, even if those are to be excepted. If rightly conducted, our schools may be made nurseries of religion in its vital and practical power, by impressing on the young the principles of Christian morality, and the sentiments of a just and generous spirit. As to pressure on the mental powers, we think we have attained about as high a point, on the average, as is consistent with the best health of body and of mind. In the instilling of good principles, and the exercise of a truly refining, humanizing, and ennobling influence on the young, there is room for indefinite improvement. Our schools will not be improved, nor the best interests of the young secured, by allowing them in any way to be made the channels for expressing personal passions or prejudices. They should be sacred to the highest public interests, to knowledge, integrity, candor, generosity, and courtesy.

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| L. J. LIVERMORE, | } Committee. |
| CHARLES TIDD, | |
| JONAS GAMMELL, | |

REPORT OF BOOK-AGENCY.

Book-Agency to Town of Lexington, Dr.

To cash, balance on hand April 1, 1864 . . . \$ 1.53
 ,, amount of books . . . 43.80
 ————— \$45.33

Cr.

By books furnished indigent children, 1864-5 . . \$26.62
 ,, ,, ,, teachers' desks . . . 12.76
 ,, ,, on hand April 1, 1865 . . . 34.68
 ————— \$74.06
 ,, balance due Agency . . . 28.73

Respectfully submitted by

H. HOLMES, *Agent*.

MARCH 31, 1865.

| SCHOOLS. | TEACHERS. | Length of School in Summer. | Length of School in Winter. | Total Number of Weeks. | Number of School- ars in Summer. | Average Attend- ance. | Number of School- ars in Winter. | Average Attend- ance. | Percentage of At- tendance for Year. | Wages per Month. | Amount paid for Instruction. |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|------------------|---------------------------------|
| HIGH | { Augustus E. Scott . . } | Weeks. 25 | 15 | 40 | 57 | 52 + | 50 | 48 + | 98 | { \$100.00 } | { \$1,000.00 } |
| ADAMS GRAMMAR | { Lusanna P. Damon . . } | 26 | 14 | 40 | 47 | 39 + | 47 | 45 | 87 | { 100.00 } | { 100.00 } |
| HANCOCK GRAMMAR | Edward O. Grover . . | 26 | 14 | 40 | 53 | 44 + | 50 | 45 | 87 | 66.50 | 665.00 |
| WARREN | Abby C. Stetson . . | 25.6 | 14.4 | 40 | 35 | 26 + | 32 | 26 + | 78 | 28.00 | 280.00 |
| FRANKLIN | Isabella Cutler . . | 25.4 | 14.6 | 40 | 28 | 22 | 26 | 17 | 75 | 24.00 | 240.00 |
| HANCOCK PRIMARY | Frances M. Parker . . | 25.8 | 14.2 | 40 | 52 | 43 | 53 | 38 | 76 | 24.00 | 240.00 |
| BOWDITCH | Elizabeth S. Parker . . | 25.4 | 14.6 | 40 | 40 | 30 + | 30 | 23 + | 77 | 24.00 | 240.00 |
| ADAMS PRIMARY | Anna M. Knight . . | 26 | 14 | 40 | 56 | 42 | 51 | 40 | 78 | 24.00 | 240.00 |
| HOWARD | Mary B. Howe . . | 25.4 | 13.6 | 39 | 29 | 20 | 29 | 20 | 70 | 20.00 | 195.00 |
| HANCOCK SUB-PRIMARY | Emily A. Peirce . . | 25 | 14 | 39 | 44 | 32 | 26 | 23 | 75 | 18.00 | 175.50 |
| | Susan E. Simonds . . | | | | | | | | | | |

Average attendance in all of the Schools, for the year, 80 per cent.; showing a loss, by absenteeism, of one-fifth of the entire appropriation.

In the High School, three scholars have not been absent or tardy during the term of four years, — Miss L. A. Goodrich, and Masters C. S. Blodgett and Winslow Simonds. Two have not been absent or tardy for three years, and one for two years. Fifteen have not been absent or tardy during the past year.